

# Request for Proposal (RFP) for Education AI Chatbot

## Customer Name

Central State University (CSU)

## Project Title

'CSU Guide' - AI-Powered Student Support and Information Chatbot

## Domain

Education - AI Chatbot for Students

## Background & Business Need

Central State University (CSU) experiences significant strain on administrative resources, particularly during peak times (e.g., registration, exam periods). The student help desks, Registrar's office, and Financial Aid teams are inundated with repetitive, routine questions (estimated to be 60% of all inquiries), leading to **long wait times for students** and **employee burnout**. CSU requires the deployment of a sophisticated, **Generative AI-powered chatbot**, "CSU Guide," accessible 24/7 via the university portal and mobile app. The objective is to **resolve 70% of Tier 1 student inquiries autonomously** and provide accurate, instant information, thereby enhancing the student experience and freeing up staff for complex, high-touch support.

## Technical Coverage

The project covers the design, development, training, integration, and deployment of a conversational AI solution. The chatbot must leverage **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** and be trained on CSU-specific content, including the Student Handbook, course catalogs, academic calendars, and departmental FAQs. The solution must support multilingual capabilities (English and Spanish as a minimum) and integrate seamlessly with the Student Information System (SIS).

## Functional Asks

- **Scope Coverage:** Initial deployment focused on answering questions related to: **Registration, Financial Aid, Campus Services (Library, Housing), and IT Support (Password resets, Wi-Fi).**
- **Seamless Handover:** Must provide a smooth, contextual transfer of complex inquiries to a human agent (live chat) when the chatbot is unable to resolve the issue. The full chat history must be provided to the human agent.
- **Personalization:** Ability to integrate with the university's **Student Information System (SIS - e.g., Banner/PeopleSoft)** via secure APIs to answer personalized questions (e.g., "What is my current GPA?", "What is my balance due?") after successful student authentication.
- **Content Management:** Provision of a user-friendly Content Management System (CMS) or knowledge base interface for non-technical CSU staff to update the chatbot's knowledge base and train new intent/response pairs without vendor reliance.
- **Analytics:** A comprehensive dashboard to track key metrics: deflection rate, student satisfaction (CSAT), most frequent questions, and human handover rate, broken down by department and time of day.

## Technical Asks

- **Core Technology:** Propose the underlying AI/NLP model and platform (Generative AI, intent-based, or hybrid). Must demonstrate accuracy and resilience against adversarial or out-of-scope prompts.
- **Integration:** Must provide secure, documented connectors for integration with the existing SIS, Learning Management System (LMS - e.g., Canvas), and campus identity management (Single Sign-On - SSO via SAML/OAuth).
- **Deployment:** The solution must be deployable as an embeddable widget on the university web portal and as an API/SDK for the existing native mobile application.
- **Scalability:** Must be able to handle up to **10,000 simultaneous student conversations** during peak enrollment periods with guaranteed latency performance.
- **Model Fine-tuning:** Detail the process for continuous model fine-tuning based on live student interactions and feedback to maintain a high accuracy rate and minimize "hallucination" of information.

## Compliance & Security Needs

- **FERPA Compliance:** Strict adherence to the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, ensuring all student data (e.g., academic records, financial info) accessed via the personalized features is protected and audited. Access controls must be granular and auditable.
- **Data Privacy:** All conversation transcripts and personalized data must be encrypted and stored securely within the United States. Clear policy on data retention and destruction is required.
- **Accessibility:** The chatbot interface must meet **WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards** for visual and keyboard navigation.

## Timelines

- **Phase 1 (Knowledge Base Curation & Model Training):** 3 Months
- **Phase 2 (SIS Integration & Pilot Group Launch):** 3 Months
- **Phase 3 (Full Campus Rollout & Live Agent Handoff Integration):** 4 Months
- **Total Project Duration:** 10 Months

## Estimated Budget

**USD \$750,000 - \$1,200,000** (Plus annual maintenance and platform subscription fees)